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If a certain definite vocabulary of 500 words is of value in the beginner's year, it is certainly of just as much value that in the second year the requirement for vocabulary should be definite and that a teacher should be able, at any time during the year, to know how far in word learning a class has progressed and how much still remains to be done in the year's work. The words that are acquired during this second year should also be of such a nature that they will be available for subsequent reading, and the same thing is clear with regard to the third and fourth years.

(To be concluded)

GONZALEZ LODGE

TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

### CORRESPONDENCE

The editorial in the issue of October 26 (Number 4) has called forth the following letters:

I

It may be interesting to hear the word of another parent concerning the use of translations. Several years ago I was preparing a boy in Greek and Latin for an Eastern college. His father, a man of great integrity, came to me and complained that I was making the work too difficult, that I was trying to give the boy a preparation that his future career in college did not necessitate. He said, "I went through my college course never using a translation, but *I shall never ask my son to do the same*". Is the problem in college different from that in the secondary school?

It is to be feared that the argument based on an abstract advantage, loss of child's time or parent's money, will not, after the first Monday in September, be very clinching for the average child. That hard work in the long run will bring the best results may be admitted, but with the exertion mental and the reward vague, the run is too long even for good High School athletes. The boy is often deplorably modern and mature in his commercial spirit. A lad to whom I talked about the use of translations said, "But John spends only half as much time on the preparation of his lessons as I do, and he makes a better showing and gets a better mark". The fault is obviously with the methods of John's instructor. Unless the teacher is keen enough to see, and resourceful enough to meet the situation in a way satisfactory to the pupils, the better showing and better mark will be too tempting; and shoddy preparation will be practiced by many pupils and upheld by many parents.

It would be interesting to know whether the boys mentioned in the Weekly of Oct. 26, who seemed to think it was right to use translations and would fain convince their mother, had tried to strengthen their own belief and arguments by a

frank talk on the subject with their instructors. Unfortunate features of the practice are the underhand way in which John uses the book, his shifting concessions made to convince himself, and perhaps his mother, that it is "all right", and the flippant amusement attendant upon discovery.

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN.

ANNA S. JONES

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May I be allowed to say a few words in regard to the use of translations from the point of view of a student?

I passed through my High School and my Normal School course under the impression that the use of translations was on a par with cheating at cards—reserved for cads only. When I came East to attend a prominent woman's college, I found a large proportion of the students using translations, and my opinion regarded as a silly or ignorant prejudice. I decided to try to get the opinion of the professor of Latin. I explained to him my previous idea, and was told that it was an extreme view, that as long as students got their lessons it was really no business of his how they did it; personally he thought the use of translations unwise but unquestionably they were useful under certain conditions. Just what these conditions were I was unable to find out.

For my part translations for Latin were, fortunately, unnecessary, but with Greek it was different. I was badly prepared and the pressure of work was in my case peculiarly heavy. If there was nothing to prevent my use of translations except the "unwisdom of it", it seemed folly to spend an hour on what I could do in ten minutes. I was too inexperienced to know the nature of the harm I was doing my work, and as there was no stress upon any but prepared work, both in class-room and examination, I was not brought to any realization of the nature of the mischief until, after an interregnum of some years, I took up the study of Greek again. I literally knew little more than my alphabet.

A recent graduate of a church college told me quite frankly that he could not have prepared his Latin and Greek without using translations. The college in question is one whose chief function is to prepare men for the ministry. It would be interesting to know just what the instructors in that college are in the habit of saying to their students on this subject.

My experience as a substitute teacher in New York showed me that a very large proportion of the students habitually used translations. I was not able to learn of any action having been taken in the matter, except a tendency to make examinations in translation largely sight work.

Personally I am of the opinion that the remedy lies in the hands of the colleges. When entrance

examinations are chiefly a matter of sight translation, with certain definite requirements in syntax and vocabulary, teachers in the schools, freed from the necessity of reading prescribed works, the preparation of which by the student they are helpless to control, may, by a larger use of sight translation and a different treatment of the prepared work itself, do something to help a situation which can only be regarded as a disgrace by all who have the cause of classical teaching at heart. College professors, on the other hand, could do much if they would make occasion to put this matter clearly and frankly to their students (many of them embryo teachers) as it appears to those outsiders of whom the writer in the *Atlantic Monthly* (referred to by another correspondent in this issue) is a type.

A STUDENT

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The editorial comment in Number 4 of *The Classical Weekly*, concerning the misuse of translations in preparing language work, opens a door which is usually left closed. It is indeed true that "this problem is the most important one that the classical teachers have to face to-day". To be sure, the problem has no charm of novelty; yet we may well raise the question whether things are not worse than they formerly were. Something concerning the demand may be argued from the supply. The writer receives periodically and has recently received a catalogue advertising *Handy Literal Translations*; and this is their watchword: "To one who is reading the Classics, a literal translation is a convenient and legitimate help". The same firm offers a series headed by a *Completely Parsed Caesar*, Bk. I, whose crowning merit is: "Each page complete in itself—all at a glance without turning a leaf". The offered prospect of doing language study without turning a leaf gives point to the severe indictment that appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1904, from which these sentences are taken: "Though the fact is blinked in every preparatory school and college in the land, honest work in the study of Latin and Greek is nowadays almost unknown. As objects of genuine study they hardly exist for the student at all. Not only does he not master them; he does not honestly attack them". This may not be ourselves as we are, but it is ourselves as a considerable part of the thinking world sees us. Whether we are optimists or pessimists as to the actual facts, this much is true: the temptation to travel by the easy path is ever present. To block the way by main strength or by method is not easy. The seat of the difficulty is the will of the learner. The will may be influenced in the direction of a wholesome and independent way of working. Classical teachers may not be able to compel, but they can testify. Has there ever been a positive body

of testimony on this subject, testimony so distinct as to command attention and to counteract the theory that a handy literal translation is a legitimate help for the learner?

HAMILTON COLLEGE,

EDWARD FITCH

### CLASSICAL CONFERENCE

On Friday afternoon, November 29, at 5 o'clock, a Classical Conference was held at the College of the City of New York, in connection with the meeting of the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland. The attendance was unusually good, consisting not merely of teachers of Latin from New York and vicinity, as well as those in attendance at the general meeting, but also of a number of persons interested in the study of Classics but not engaged in teaching them. The meeting was called to order by Dr. Riess, who, after a few remarks, introduced the first speaker, Professor J. I. Bennett of Union College, who presented a paper on *Ways and Means to Promote the Study of Greek*. Professor Bennett maintained that a brighter future was to be expected for Greek than the present indications would seem to warrant. The pendulum in education was sure to swing back again, and when the minds of men become less occupied with commercialism and more with the things of the spirit, Greek, which is pre-eminently a literature of the spirit, would come to its own again. The paper was discussed by Professor Sihler of New York University, who urged that all teachers of Latin should be not merely expected but required to have a good knowledge of Greek as well, inasmuch as a correct understanding of Latin literature without a first hand knowledge of the sources of that literature is impossible. Professor Andrews of Colgate University urged that Greek teachers should pay less attention to philological details and should devote themselves to educating their students in the broad fields of literature so that they may have something all their lives as a result of their study of Greek.

Mr. J. W. Scudder, of the Albany Academy, presented the second paper on *The Need for a Revision of our Latin Course*. In this paper Mr. Scudder urged that teachers of Latin should aim to secure a greater definiteness in requirements for entrance to college, and should likewise attempt to develop the power of their pupils by greater attention to sight translation and to honesty in preparation. Mr. Scudder also urged that Cicero should be taught in the last year of the High School rather than in the next to the last year, and should be preceded by Vergil. At the conclusion of this paper Professor Knapp, of Barnard College, made a few remarks on the necessity of concerted action on the